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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Forty-fourth session

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1029th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 March 1994, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

PREVENTION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING EARLY WARNING AND URGENT PROCEDURES (continued)

Proposal to amend the Committee's rules of procedure (CERD/C/35/Rev.3, CERD/C/43/Misc.3) (continued)

1. Mr. SHAHI suggested that a new rule could be inserted after rule 67, based on the wording of the text headed "Urgent Procedures" and contained in paragraph 10 of annex III to the Committee's report (A/48/18). He recalled that that text had been adopted in 1993 following the request by the Secretary-General that ways should be found to empower him to bring massive violations of human rights to the attention of the Security Council. The Chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies had then urged those bodies to take steps, if necessary by procedural innovations, both to prevent human rights violations from occurring and to monitor emergency situations of all kinds arising within the jurisdiction of States parties.

2. He suggested that his proposal could be considered as an alternative to the proposal by the informal working group circulated earlier.

3. Mr. BANTON, replying to Mr. Yutzis' question on what was to be understood by "additional information", said that, when the Committee had first invited States parties to send representatives to present reports, it had been the practice to define any statement made by the representative as additional information and to include it in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. That practice had been followed for some years, but was now discontinued. However, introductory statements made by representatives and answers given to questions could still be regarded as additional information.

4. In his view, it was desirable to make some amendments to the rules of procedure because situations might arise in which the Committee wanted to take urgent action and was prevented from doing so because no provision had been made for such action. The amendments should be as simple as possible and should demand as little as possible from the members of the Committee. He was therefore proposing that nothing should be subtracted from the existing text of rule 67, paragraph 3, but that a small addition should be made to it.

5. He could endorse the views of Mr. Valencia Rodriguez on the subject, as well as those of Mr. Ferrero Costa, and saw no incompatibility between them. Although the reports of States parties should be the Committee's prime source of information, that did not mean that they should be the sole source.

6. If the existing text of paragraph 3 was considered to be too long, he suggested that a colon could be added after the words "it may". A second alternative would be to amend that part of the text to read: "... it may follow one or more of several courses: request the State party to furnish additional information; make suggestions and general recommendations in accordance with

article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention; or take follow-up measures with regard to such suggestions and recommendations with a view to preventing the deterioration of the situation in the State concerned".

7. He pointed out that the Committee had been spending an inordinate amount of time on paragraph 3 and urged it to move on to paragraph 4, which was of much greater importance.

8. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said he could not agree that the Committee might be prevented from taking action simply because such action was not provided for in the rules of procedure. The addition of a new rule would solve nothing because no rules could force States parties to comply with the Committee's requests or to accept its intervention. In fact, neither the Working Group on Kosovo nor the mission to the former Yugoslavia conducted by Mr. Yutzis had been provided for under the rules of procedure.

9. He urged that the Committee should proceed with caution: there was not yet sufficient agreement on basic principles for it to be able to embark on the process of redrafting its rules of procedure.

10. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that whatever was decided in connection with the rules of procedure would in no way detract from the importance of the working paper entitled "Urgent Procedures" adopted in 1993.

11. Mr. BANTON said the amendment to paragraph 3 was important because it would make possible the action provided for in the proposed new paragraph 4. He asked Mr. Aboul-Nasr whether he could agree to the Chairman taking such action if that rule had not first been agreed on by the Committee.

12. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said he would have no objection to such a procedure, which in any case had already been accepted in principle. What counted was the response of the State party concerned and the Committee's rules of procedure would make no difference in that respect.

13. Mr. DIACONU said that the longer the discussion continued, the more he was inclined to share the views of Mr. Aboul-Nasr, although he saw the advantage of having flexible rules of procedure which would not unduly restrict the Committee's scope of action. There was no need for decisions or general recommendations that the Committee had already adopted to be repeated in the rules of procedure: it would be enough to include a reference to the text on early warning and urgent procedures and the Committee could then take whatever action was called for when the occasion arose, as indeed it had already done in practice.

14. Mr. YUTZIS pointed out that it was a principle of law that, where a procedure had been followed over time and had been found to be satisfactory, it was deemed to be legitimate. He therefore saw no urgent need to introduce formal amendments to the existing rules of procedure.

15. On the point raised by Mr. Banton, he had not in fact asked for a definition of "additional information". On the contrary, he had said that the Committee already had an established practice of taking account of information not provided directly by the State party and that that practice should be continued.

16. Mr. de GOUTTES said it would appear from the discussion that there was no wish to alter the text on early warning and urgent procedures which had been adopted by consensus in 1993 and had been included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly (A/48/18, annex III).

17. As far as amendments to the rules of procedure were concerned, the Committee had a choice between two solutions. It could either follow its established practice of making only minimal changes and introduce some reference to the text on early warning and urgent procedures it had already adopted. That would have the advantage of causing the least disruption to the existing rules, but the disadvantage of being somewhat arbitrary, since it would be difficult to decide where such a text could be inserted.

18. The second solution, suggested by Mr. Shahi, was more ambitious, but at the same time more simple. It would consist in introducing a completely new rule to cover the whole question of early warning and urgent procedures, based on the text contained in paragraph 10 of annex III to the Committee's report (A/48/18). Such a rule would be easier for the Committee to interpret because it covered all aspects of the question. It would also be easier to draft: thus, the chapeau to paragraph 10, the second sentence of subparagraph (b), subparagraphs (f) and (g) and the last sentence of subparagraph (h), would be deleted, but the rest of paragraph 10 would be reproduced as it stood.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to comment on the proposed new paragraph 4 of rule 67.

20. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that the proposed new versions of rule 67, paragraphs 3 and 4, and rule 68, paragraph 4, were far from acceptable. It was not so much a matter of wording as the need to reach agreement on the underlying principles. Quoting the part of paragraph 4 of rule 67 which read "If a situation which calls for an urgent procedure ... has been brought to the attention of the Chairman", he asked who was being referred to as getting in touch with the Chairman. If it were a State party, would the response follow the procedure laid down in article 11 of the Convention or would the new rule of procedure take precedence? Article 11 provided for a lengthy procedure that might take months or even years. On the other hand, if the matter were brought to the attention of the Chairman by an individual and the new rule under the urgent procedures arrangement was activated, it would look as though individuals were being given priority over States parties. Adopting rules of procedure in a vacuum was risky and might lay the Committee open to serious criticism. The rules were interlinked and had to be coordinated with the provisions of the Convention.

21. Mr. SHAHI thanked Mr. de Gouttes for his constructive approach to his own earlier suggestion. In making that suggestion, he had omitted to note the relevance of paragraph 10 (b) of the working paper on early warning measures (A/48/18, annex III) to the dispatch of the good offices mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). He thought there was considerable merit in the idea of culling passages from the working paper for incorporation in the amended rules of procedure. An analogy could be drawn with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, many passages of which reproduced the wording of the Charter of the United Nations.

22. Mr. van BOVEN said that the proposed new or amended rules had to be viewed in the context of the relevant chapters of the rules of procedure. Rules 67 and 68, for example, came under the heading of chapter XV (Reports and information from States parties under article 9 of the Convention), but the complaints procedure was dealt with in chapter XVI (Communications from States parties under article 11 of the Convention) and chapter XVIII (Procedure for considering communications from individuals or groups of individuals under article 14 of the Convention).

23. Mr. DIACONU said that the main shortcoming of the text of the proposed paragraph 4 of rule 67 was that it was unclear who was drawing the Chairman's attention to an urgent situation and on what basis. The new paragraph referred to a time when the Committee was not in session. The procedure was therefore a simple one. If the Chairman thought that a violation of the Convention had taken place, he should consult the Committee members in writing and, if the majority was in agreement, request further information from the State party concerned for consideration at the following session.

24. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as a member of the Committee, said that he sympathized with the Chairman who would be called upon to deal with such a contingency. A decision would be needed on the validity of the request for intervention and on whether the members of Committee agreed with the action to be taken. If the request came from a State party, the Committee would have to act in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. If it came from an individual or a group, the rules of procedure could be invoked, but the language would then have to be made much more precise.

25. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ pointed out that rule 3 of the rules of procedure, which provided for the convening of special sessions, could be invoked in the event of an emergency.

26. Mr. de GOUTTES expressed regret that the Committee had not reacted to Mr. Shahi's suggestion concerning the incorporation of parts of the working paper on early warning and urgent procedures in the rules of procedure in the form of a new paragraph. The Committee's response would have been of particular interest to the working group.

27. Mr. Diaconu had interpreted the proposed new paragraph 4 of rule 67 as referring only to situations arising when the Committee was not in session. As

an urgent procedure might also be necessary during a session, when of course it would be up to the Committee as a whole to take action, he wondered whether there might be some ambiguity in the existing wording of the paragraph. As it implicitly covered both situations, it might be necessary to make that fact more explicit.

28. Mr. van BOVEN said that, while there was merit in Mr. Shahi's suggestion, he was not sure whether the proposed new paragraph 4 was being placed in the proper context. It was somewhat artificial to relate the urgent procedure provision to chapter XV of the rules of procedure on reports and information from States parties. It was a sui generis procedure that could not be said to come under articles 9, 11 or 14 of the Convention. Indeed it was not explicitly covered by the Convention at all, although it was certainly in line with its spirit and with widely felt needs. Perhaps another context could be found for the incorporation of the material suggested by Mr. Shahi.

29. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as a member of the Committee, noted how farsighted and far-reaching the early warning procedure adopted the previous year had been. He thought that the Committee should try more and more to base its deliberations on that working paper.

30. Speaking as Chairman, he invited the members to comment on the proposed new paragraph 4 of rule 68.

31. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked for clarification of the reference to the "early warning mechanisms as may be established". Did it refer to machinery that might be established or that the Committee hoped would be established?

32. He was not enthusiastic about the reference to the Security Council in connection with recommendations for action. He would prefer a more neutral formula which provided for the channelling of recommendations through the Secretary-General to the relevant organs. It was not usual for the Security Council to deal with human rights unless international peace and security were threatened. Moreover, many countries had become critical of the way the Council was operating. It had become a secretive body, deliberating behind closed doors, and was no longer deemed to be impartial. It discussed human rights when major Powers felt that that was in their interests. For example, the fate of the Kurds had been of great concern when Iraq had been in the line of fire, but the situation of the Kurds in Turkey was being ignored. Moreover, the Security Council was not even representative of the community of nations and the General Assembly had been discussing how it might be reformed to give the third world more equitable representation.

33. The CHAIRMAN asked whether Mr. Aboul-Nasr would agree in principle to a provision in the proposed new paragraph 4 to the effect that recommendations might be addressed to the Secretary-General.

34. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that such a provision would be acceptable.

35. Mr. YUTZIS proposed that the debate on the rules of procedure should be closed and that the working group should be given an opportunity to meet again and redraft its proposals, many of which had been rejected, in the light of the discussion that had taken place.

36. Mr. FERRERO COSTA supported the proposal for the closure of the debate, but pointed out that not all proposals had been rejected. For instance, the proposed new paragraph 4 of rule 68 had, in essence, been adopted by the Committee the previous year as paragraph 10 (j) of the working paper on early warning and urgent procedures.

37. Mr. YUTZIS said that he fully agreed with Mr. Ferrero Costa. He had not wished to suggest that the Committee should go back on previous decisions, but rather to propose that the working group should seek to revise and improve the original version of the draft amendments.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the consensus view seemed to be that the working group should be asked to reconvene, to consider all the comments and suggestions made and to submit a fresh proposal to the Committee. The group might also be in the best position to decide which of the two methodological options referred to by Mr. de Gouttes was preferable.

ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION (continued):

(a) ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION UNDER ARTICLE 9, PARAGRAPH 2, OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

(b) EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING REPORTING OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (continued)

39. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the proposal by Mr. Banton to amend rules 33 and 34 of the Committee's rules of procedure concerning the summary records of the Committee's proceedings.

40. Mr. BANTON said that the provisions of rules 33 and 34 of the rules of procedure prevented the summary records of the Committee's meetings from being available for public distribution until they had been issued in their final, corrected form. The Committee's work could not be properly followed by States parties because of the substantial amount of time it took for the final versions to be prepared. The Committee might wish to consider an amendment to those rules of procedure in order to speed up the distribution of the summary records, subject to the issuing of a subsequent corrigendum, and thus bring its practice into line with that of other treaty bodies. He therefore proposed that a new penultimate sentence should be added to rule 33, reading: "Corrections to the records of the meeting shall be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued at the end of the session concerned.", and that the words "in their final form" should be deleted from rule 34, paragraph 1.

41. Mr. de GOUTTES said that he supported Mr. Banton's proposal.

42. Mr. YUTZIS said that he also welcomed Mr. Banton's proposal. As he understood it, however, there were also other reasons why the summary records were not available sooner and he would appreciate some explanation from the Secretariat in that regard.

43. Mr. JOHNSON (Secretary of the Committee) said that the requirement that the Committee's summary records should be issued in their final form before being available for general distribution meant that they were not sent as a matter of course to the permanent missions and bodies concerned with the work of the United Nations until about a year - and in some language versions, two years - after the Committee's sessions. The basic problem was that the United Nations was having to produce an increasing volume of documentation with the same resources. In other committees, the provisional summary records were available shortly after the session and a corrigendum containing corrections submitted by Committee members and in some cases delegations was issued subsequently. Such corrigenda were seldom more than two to four pages long.

44. In reply to a question by the CHAIRMAN, he confirmed that the amendments to the rules of procedure proposed by Mr. Banton would help expedite the process.

45. Replying to a question by Mr. ABOUL-NASR, he said that, under the existing rules of procedure a State party could receive the provisional summary record of a meeting of interest to it if it made a specific request to the Secretariat to that effect.

46. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said that he was in favour of amending the rules of procedure, as proposed, in order to expedite the process, provided that it was clear that the records thus issued were provisional only and would be published subsequently in their final form.

47. Mrs. SADIQ ALI said that the existing system of submitting corrections, including the requirement that they should be sent within one week of the issuing of the provisional summary records, was unsatisfactory, as her corrections had never been incorporated into the final version.

48. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ said that he endorsed the amendments proposed by Mr. Banton in view of the long delays under the current system and in the light of the Secretary's explanations.

49. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to amend rule 33 of its rules of procedure by inserting a new penultimate sentence reading: "Corrections to the records of the meeting shall be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued at the end of the session concerned."; and to amend rule 34 by deleting the words "in their final form" in paragraph 1.

50. It was so decided.

51. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume the discussion it had begun at the 1027th meeting on the revision of its guidelines to reflect the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration; the highlighting of its concluding observations in its annual report and the elimination from that report of summaries of the Committee's dialogue with reporting States; its policy concerning the release of concluding observations, taking into account the practice of other committees; and a request for resources for pre-sessional working groups.

52. Mr. SONG Shuhua said that the introduction of pre-sessional working groups would complicate the Committee's procedures, which should be kept simple and flexible. Various improvements had been introduced in recent years, such as the country rapporteur system, which saved time and focused the discussions. Members other than the country rapporteur should, however, be at liberty to raise other issues and reporting States given time to prepare their answers.

53. It was important for the Committee to maintain good relations and create an atmosphere of trust with reporting States. It should not pass judgement or act as a teacher interrogating a recalcitrant student. There was no reason for secrecy; States could be expected to provide more satisfactory answers when they were informed in advance of the questions to be asked. The Committee's aim was, after all, to achieve the best possible results. Country rapporteurs should prepare their comments and questions and submit them, through the Secretariat and possibly in consultation with the Chairman, well in advance and not just before the meeting. Questions that State representatives were unable to answer immediately for want of the necessary information were easily forgotten and often omitted from subsequent reports.

54. Mr. de GOUTTES recalled that there had already been some discussion at the 1027th meeting on the important question whether country rapporteurs should contact the delegations of reporting States in advance. He himself was in favour of that idea, but he had by no means suggested that country rapporteurs should consider themselves under an obligation to communicate to reporting States all the questions they intended to ask. The burden of doing so would be too heavy and the effects might be counterproductive, since unwelcome pressures might be brought to bear. On the other hand, advance contact with reporting States, sometimes within just a few hours of the formal meeting, had often proved helpful in the past as a means of indicating the main thrust of the questions that would be asked. The objective of the exercise was not to interrogate and still less to entrap States parties; it was to obtain replies that were as comprehensive and as detailed as possible to technical questions from the Committee. To the extent possible, reporting States should be allowed time to prepare their replies to the initial round of questions.

55. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ said he agreed that the Committee's concluding observations on each State party's report should be made available to the Government concerned and to the media at the end of each session.

56. There had been various suggestions about ways of responding to the recommendation of the Third Committee of the General Assembly that more time should be allowed for States to prepare replies to lists of issues. The suggestion that there should be inter-sessional or pre-sessional working groups had failed to win the support of most members of the Committee. The other option, namely, that country rapporteurs or other members should give reporting States, through the Secretariat, advance notice of questions and comments had disadvantages. Many States parties could not afford to send delegations to Geneva and, when they did, they stayed only briefly and would not be helped greatly by receiving lists of questions in advance. Some States parties did not have permanent missions in Geneva and the lists of questions would have to be forwarded to New York or to their capitals. Where there were missions in Geneva, they did not necessarily have adequate staff to prepare comprehensive replies. Furthermore, fresh information provided in the State representatives' introductions might invalidate the lists of comments prepared previously.

57. He endorsed the view that practical difficulties would be involved if country rapporteurs had to prepare suitably drafted comments and questions in advance of meetings. It would therefore be preferable to continue with past practice, but to allow for maximum flexibility, giving the representatives of reporting States at least a lunch hour or a night to prepare their replies, although even that would provide no guarantee, especially in the case of States parties with short-staffed missions, that comprehensive replies would be forthcoming.

58. Mr. DIACONU said that, while it might be useful to compile advance lists of the questions to be asked of reporting States, that would place a heavy burden on country rapporteurs; moreover, the shaping of those questions would not be easy to decide. He suggested that reporting States should be allowed time to prepare their replies to questions; that might be achieved by scheduling two consecutive meetings, with an overnight break in between, for the consideration of a report, it being understood that all the questions would be asked at the first meeting. At present on the pretext of insufficient time, reporting States often availed themselves of the opportunity of replying only to those questions which suited them.

59. Mr. de GOUTTES said that he endorsed the suggestion by Mr. Diaconu.

60. Mrs. SADIQ ALI said that she agreed with the comments by Mr. Valencia Rodriguez. She would certainly be reluctant to continue in the role of country rapporteur if she had to prepare her questions well in advance; the material she required was not always readily available in India. She also agreed that the representatives of reporting States should be allowed time to prepare their replies to questions. They should be informed by the Secretariat that they should be prepared to stay for more than just a few hours or a single day.

61. Mr. BANTON, summarizing the debate on agenda item 5, in connection with which the Committee's views on Mr. Alston's interim report (A/CONF.157/PC/62/Add.11/Rev.1) were not yet complete, said that he had heard no

objection to the amendment of the general guidelines to reflect the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration.

62. Secondly, the members of the Committee who had referred to the issue had been in favour of the continued inclusion of summaries of dialogues with reporting States in the Committee's annual report to the General Assembly. His own view was that, until the summary records could be issued more speedily, such summaries could not be dispensed with.

63. Thirdly, all speakers had supported the policy concerning the release of concluding observations, which could thus be endorsed by the Committee as a whole.

64. Fourthly, it seemed to have been agreed that the time was not right to request resources for pre-sessional working groups.

65. It also seemed that the Committee was generally happy with existing arrangements for the work of country rapporteurs and considered that they should, if they so wished, exercise the option of making their questions available in advance to reporting States, through the intermediary of the Secretariat. On the question of allowing for an interval in which reporting States could prepare their replies to questions, he considered that the Secretariat could be relied on to act on the Committee's views in the matter.

66. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Committee's report to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly would contain a summary of the current discussion, not only to reassure countries that the Committee had taken note of their views, but also to inform them of the Committee's reasoning in cases where the pattern of its dialogue with States parties differed somewhat from that followed by other treaty bodies.

67. The CHAIRMAN said he had been informed by the Secretariat that there would be no difficulty in arranging the consideration of periodic reports so as to allow time for reflection by reporting States on their replies to questions. Measures to that end would be taken as from the Committee's forty-fifth session.

68. Mr. WOLFRUM said that there was a more flexible alternative to the type of scheduling suggested by Mr. Diaconu: meetings devoted to the consecutive questioning of two or more reporting States could be followed by meetings devoted to a matching sequence of replies.

69. At present, the Committee spent an inordinate amount of time on procedural issues at the expense of the consideration of reports. That was a matter which might not altogether reassure the General Assembly.

70. The CHAIRMAN said that the amount of time required to consider a report properly was variable.

71. Mr. DIACONU, referring to Mr. Banton's comment on the amendment of the general guidelines to reflect the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration, asked whether those recommendations really had any direct bearing on the Convention and the Committee's work for the elimination of racial discrimination. What amendment was being considered?

72. Mr. van BOVEN said that improved dialogue was his main concern. Since the Committee had rightly turned to many sources of information other than reports themselves in recent years, it would be only fair to allow States parties sufficient latitude and opportunity to prepare their replies to questions. He saw no reason why country rapporteurs should not, at some stage, apprise reporting States of the main issues that would be raised.

73. Mr. RECHETOV said that any improvement in the dialogue with reporting States depended partly on the composition of their delegations and their willingness or otherwise to provide exhaustive answers to questions. In that connection, the frankness of the recent dialogue with the representative of Burundi had been both impressive and heartening. Unfortunately, unilateral steps by the Committee to enrich the dialogue might not always be matched by States parties.

74. He agreed that the amount of time spent in discussing improvements in the Committee's working methods must be reduced. It seemed to him that a significant number of country reports had been ready for consideration for some time. Why was consideration sometimes postponed for two or three sessions for no apparent reason? Who decided which reports were to be presented? Why was there such a backlog? Last and by no means least, what was to be done about the eight or nine new States that had emerged in the territory of the former Soviet Union and that had not yet made their position concerning the Convention known?

75. Mr. JOHNSON (Secretary of the Committee), drawing attention to the information paper on reports received and reviews scheduled, said that reports were usually considered in the order in which they had been received. Occasionally Governments indicated a preference for the scheduling of their reports for one session or the other during the year. Requests for postponement might also be received. The scheduling of reviews of States excessively overdue in their reports was based on decisions by the Committee. In the case of cancellations or postponements, attempts were generally made to contact and convene the next country on the list.

76. The information paper listed the reports that were pending, the status of requests for additional information and country reviews postponed on the basis of a promised report.

77. As could be seen from that information, the schedule for the forty-fifth session would be a heavy one and he presumed that the Bureau would establish priorities in due course.

78. Any backlog with regard to pending reports might be attributed partly to cancellations requested by the States concerned; in some cases, however, it could

be attributed to the Secretariat's inability to fit all the reports scheduled for a given session into the agenda, largely because it was heavily loaded with other routine items. That was particularly true where the March session was concerned.

79. Mr. BANTON asked whether any curtailment of the time available for the discussion of procedural issues at the present session would have permitted the consideration of other reports.

80. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the eve of the session, the Committee had been unaware that four requests for postponement had been made. In his view, no backlog could be attributed to failure on the part of the Committee. He confirmed that the Bureau would do its best to guarantee efficient scheduling at the August session, for which some 18 reports were now available.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.